

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computerized method for guiding personnel servicing equipment requiring repair while at an equipment work site, with the personnel being guided through a plurality of tasks for evaluating the health of the equipment to identify the nature and extent of service needed, and determining at least one preferred work site location for performing the services based on technical and business decision-making criteria, said method comprising:

providing a database accessible from the equipment work site, the database comprising detailed data for health assessment and servicing of selected equipment, the database further comprising technical and business decision-making data

regarding the service capabilities and availability, and costs of transportation to and servicing of equipment at available work sites for servicing the selected equipment;

configuring a servicing wizard for eliciting information regarding the identity and characteristics of the equipment to be repaired, providing instructions to the service personnel to determine the nature of the equipment fault and the servicing required for the equipment, and determining based on the technical and business decision-making criteria each preferred work site;

providing an input/output device at each work site for communicating with the database;

selecting the equipment to be serviced;

accessing the database to interface with the servicing wizard for the selected equipment;

providing in response to a first set of prompts to the personnel from the servicing wizard at least one set of observations selected from the group comprising operational performance of the selected equipment and fault indications detected in the equipment, and further providing in response to a second set of prompts at least one set of technical and business decision-making criteria, including the cost and timeliness for performing services that may be required for the selected equipment; and

processing said observation information, and said technical and business decision-making criteria relative to the servicing wizard to determine whether or not the selected equipment needs to be serviced, and if so the nature and extent of that service, said processing further determining a preferred work site from among the available work sites at which to perform the service in accordance with the technical and business decision-making criteria.

2. The computerized method of claim 1 wherein each work site is connected to one another as a networked chain of sites.

10 3. The computerized method of claim 2 wherein the chain of work sites includes work sites managed by independent business entities.

15 4. The computerized method of claim 2 further comprising identifying servicing practices gathered from the chain of work sites and evaluating the value of such practices based on the technical and business decision-making criteria.

5. The computerized method of claim 4 further comprising updating the database to include any preferred servicing practices gathered from the work sites to share uniformly high quality service practices across the work sites.

20 6. The computerized method of claim 1 further comprising accumulating in the database historical repair and/or service data, and including any diagnostics data for each respective equipment.

25 7. The computerized method of claim 6 further comprising assigning a computer-readable tracking identifier to each respective equipment so that service personnel may retrieve using the tracking identifier the historical data for any respective piece of equipment regardless of the location of the work site.

8. The computerized method of claim 6 further comprising performing analysis on the historical data so as to determine servicing trends as a function of any respective work site location.

5 9. A computerized system for guiding personnel servicing equipment requiring repair while at an equipment work site, with the personnel being guided through a plurality of tasks for evaluating the health of the equipment to identify the nature and extent of service needed, and determining at least one preferred work site location for performing the services based on technical and business decision-making
10 criteria, said system comprising:

a database accessible from the equipment work site, the database comprising detailed data for health assessment and servicing of selected equipment, the database further comprising technical and business decision-making data regarding the service capabilities and availability, and costs of transportation to and servicing of equipment
15 at available work sites for servicing the selected equipment;

a servicing wizard for eliciting information regarding the identity and characteristics of the equipment to be repaired, providing instructions to the service personnel to determine the nature of the equipment fault and the servicing required for the equipment, and determining based on the technical and business decision-making
20 criteria each preferred work site;

an input/output device at each work site for communicating with the database and selecting the equipment to be serviced;

a database management module for accessing the database to interface with the servicing wizard for the selected equipment and provide in response to a first set of prompts to the personnel from the servicing wizard at least one set of observations
25 selected from the group comprising operational performance of the selected equipment and fault indications detected in the equipment, and further providing in response to a second set of prompts at least one set of technical and business decision-making criteria, including the cost and timeliness for performing services that may be
30 required for the selected equipment; and

a processor configured to process said observation information, and said technical and business decision-making criteria relative to the servicing wizard to determine whether or not the selected equipment needs to be serviced, and if so the nature and extent of that service, said processing further determining a preferred work site from among the available work sites at which to perform the service in accordance with the technical and business decision-making criteria.

10. The computerized system of claim 9 wherein each work site is connected to one another as a networked chain of sites.

11. The computerized system of claim 10 wherein the chain of work sites includes work sites managed by independent business entities.

12. The computerized system of claim 10 further comprising a processing module for identifying servicing practices gathered from the chain of work sites and evaluating the value of such practices based on the technical and business decision-making criteria.

13. The computerized system of claim 12 further comprising an updating module configured to update the database to include any preferred servicing practices gathered from the work sites to share uniformly high quality service practices across the work sites.

14. The computerized system of claim 9 further comprising a historical data accumulator for accumulating in the database historical repair and/or service data, and including any diagnostics data for each respective equipment.

15. The computerized system of claim 14 further comprising a computer-readable tracking identifier assigned to each respective equipment so that service personnel may retrieve using the tracking identifier the historical data for any respective piece of equipment regardless of the location of the work site.

16. The computerized system of claim 14 further comprising an analyzer module configured to perform analysis on the historical data so as to determine servicing trends as a function of any respective work site location.

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